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ABSTRACT

The Fulbright-Hays Teaching Exchange with Germany is a one-for-one exchange for approximately twenty pairs of American and German teachers. American elementary and secondary school teachers as well as college instructors and assistant professors replace their German counterparts for an academic year at either a "Hauptschule" (a non-college track school with grades one through nine), a "Realschule" (a step up from the Hauptschule with grades one through ten), or a "Gymnasium" (a college preparatory school). This exchange provides the Fulbrighter with the opportunity to: (1) promote international understanding; (2) present American views on problems in the Unites States; (3) improve one's knowledge of the German language and school system; (4) increase one's awareness of German life and customs; (5) make German friends; and (6) explore many countries in Europe. This article focuses on three aspects of the Fulbright Teachers Exchange: (1) the teaching assignment in a "Gymnasium"; (2) avenues of promoting international understanding such as, the use of educational and entertainment films, exchanges with an American school, German-American social gatherings and basketball games; and (3) the benefits of living in Germany for a year, particularly the comfortable living quarters, close friendships formed, and the opportunities for travel. (Author/AMH)

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How to Have a Successful Fulbright[1]

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of my busy and rewarding year in Germany on the Fulbright-Hays Teachers Exchange. The first part describes the teaching assignment itself. The second section concerns possible avenues for promoting international understanding. The third and final segment discusses some of the benefits of living in Germany for a year.

There are three types of Fulbright awards: (1) one for graduate students to study abroad, (2) one for school teachers and junior faculty members in college to teach overseas, and (3) one for senior faculty members to do either university lecturing or advanced research abroad. The Teachers Exchange is open to elementary and secondary school teachers, college instructors, assistant professors, and occasionally associate professors. This is the exchange in which I participated.

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[1] This article is the edited version of a paper I presented as guest speaker at three conferences: (1) the American Association of Teachers of German Section at the Fourteenth Annual Michigan Foreign Language Conference, East Lansing, Mi., October 1977, (2) the Goethe Institute Workshop for Florida Teachers of German, Gainesville, Fl., November 1978, and (3) the Goethe Institute Seminar for Alabama Teachers of German, Huntsville, Al., December 1978.

The basic requirements for individuals interested in participating in the Fulbright Teachers Exchange with Germany are: U.S. citizenship, fluency in German, and five years of successful, full-time teaching. Good health and emotional maturity are also necessary.

At the time I participated (1974-75) the German government paid all expenses for American participants. Each American teacher received a generous grant which was not taxed by Germany but was taxed by the U.S. government. This approximated the take-home Gehalt "salary" of a regular German teacher. My wife and I were able to purchase a used VW, rent a beautiful, spacious apartment in a medieval village, and travel to twelve countries in Europe on this award. Since 1977 the financial arrangements for both German and American exchange teachers have changed completely as the governments no longer assume the bulk of the financial burden. Americans and Germans must secure leaves of absence from their home schools with pay. To help meet expenses, the German Fulbright Commission does provide an 8000 DM cost-of-living supplement. Transportation to and from Germany and travel allowances to attend an orientation session in Bonn and a mid-year Berlin conference, for the grantee only, are paid by the West German government. The U.S. State Department provides a modest medical insurance policy for the grantee and the option of purchasing the same for the grantee's dependents.

This exchange program operates differently from others

in that it is a one-for-one exchange. The Fulbright Commission matches accepted applicants from the United States and Germany. These teachers exchange positions for one year. In all nearly forty teachers (twenty pairs of "partners") participated in the German-American Fulbright Teachers Exchange program during the 1974-75 school year.

The Bonn government goes to great lengths to welcome the Fulbrighters. The German Fulbright Commission wines and dines the teachers, their families, and their German exchange partners during a week of orientation in early August. This relaxed program is designed to enable the American and German partners to meet face-to-face so that they can provide each other with vital information about what to expect in the coming year. In addition, there are lectures about modern Germany and its school system. Towards the end of the week a Betreuungslehrer (teacher assigned to assist in school matters) comes to escort each participant to his/her new home.

American teachers usually teach only English classes in a German school. If a person is especially qualified to teach another subject, he or she might have the opportunity to do so. A participant's assignment to a Hauptschule (a non-college track school with grades one through nine), a Realschule (a step up from the Hauptschule with grades one through ten), or a Gymnasium (a college preparatory school culminating with Abitur) depends entirely on where his/her "partner" teaches. I taught in a Gesamtschule, i.e., a school which contained

all three types of schools. My classes, however, were primarily in the Oberstufe "senior high" of the Gymnasium.

The normal teaching load for a German teacher in a Gymnasium is 24 hours per week. Although the Fulbright Commission recommends approximately 18 hours for exchange teachers, my schedule included 19 teaching hours at the Herderschule in Giessen. Each semester I taught six different courses. These included Russian in a ninth grade Realschule class and in a thirteenth grade Gymnasial class and English in the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth grades of the Gymnasium. Except for my ninth grade Russian class in the Realschule, which I found totally incapable of learning Russian, my students in the Oberstufe exhibited talent, interest, and industry. One nice thing about teaching classes in the Oberstufe is that the teacher, not the school, decides on the course content. I chose American Science Fiction and Modern American Drama as topics for my English classes on the senior level. In the science fiction course we read short stories from Kurt Vonnegut's Welcome to the Monkey House and Isaac Asimov's The Hugo Winners and Nine Tomorrows, all of which proved popular with the students. In fact, at the end of the first semester I discovered that I was supposed to teach another twelfth-grade English course on a subject of my own choosing. The Gymnasialzweigleiter "assistant principal" informed me that I would need at least ten students for the new course and that my own students could sign up by dropping

their previous choices. When I announced to the class that I would be teaching a new course the following semester on Modern American Drama and that I needed students, I was overwhelmed by the response. All seventeen students signed up, and when the word spread, students from other classes began asking for permission to join my course.

Things were not always this rosy, however. One of the so-called "democratic" institutions at the Herderschule is the Reflexionsphase "evaluation period" in the Oberstufe. It normally occurs after the first written test has been returned if the students decide they want it. The purpose of this period is to let the students "constructively" criticize course content, grades, and teacher. Frequently, students upset with their grades attack both teacher and course. I learned that many teachers respond by agreeing with students' comments, promptly forgetting them, and continuing with the lesson at hand. Of my four classes, only one class decided to have a Reflexionsphase. I had just returned a test in which I had given half the class "5's" (F's) and the other half mostly "4's" (D's). When the students asked me to leave the room I did so with apprehension, not knowing what to expect. When the students summoned me back I was completely surprised that there was no criticism of the course content or grades; the class had simply made a list of minor suggestions including a request for a field trip!

In the upper level English classes, I reviewed the elements of précis writing and text interpretation, which

students are expected to have mastered by Abitur. In addition to reading American science fiction and American drama, we also read short articles from Newsweek and the Christian Science Monitor on topics such as world hunger, teenage drinking, the influence of TV on reading skills, and the role of the United States in world affairs. My most enjoyable class each week was my grade 13 Russian Arbeitsgemeinschaft "work study group." This is a voluntary non-credit course in which there are no tests, homework, or pressures of any kind. Students seemed genuinely interested in learning as evidenced by the fact that they were willing to take this course in addition to their normal heavy course schedule.

Since it is felt that students should have some input into the determination of their final grades, several periods are set aside at the end of each semester for the teacher and students to discuss final marks and to reach agreement on them. I found that the system does not work well because many students make unreasonable demands and the "discussions" often turn into unpleasant hassling. This can be understood in light of the fact that students are under a great deal of pressure to earn points for admission to the university under the Numerus clausus "limited number of places available." At the end of the first semester I made the mistake of giving in on grades. This led to much fighting and heated discussion over grades. So at the end of the second semester I was firm. I raised only two grades, by one point each, in cases where I felt the students were justified. As a result, the grade discussions went much more smoothly and pleasantly.

I must conclude from this experience that grade discussions chiefly serve the purpose of giving students the illusion that they have a voice in determining their grades. If a teacher is weak, however, the students will seize the opportunity to raise their grades as much as they possibly can.

My Fulbright Teaching experience was an unusual one in that I did considerably more than was required. I felt that the purpose of the exchange was not simply to teach my German partner's courses, but also to provide additional experiences for the German students and to improve German-American relations on a personal level. I wanted to do something of lasting value for the school and community which a German teacher would be unable to do.

Promoting International Understanding

Thousands of American military families are stationed in Germany. Many live in "Little Americas" isolated from the German communities around them. These Americans have their own apartment complexes, shopping centers, theaters, restaurants, clubs, and recreational facilities. Since 1972, when our all-volunteer Army emerged, I fear the isolation has deepened. The educational level of our soldiers has dropped, fewer and fewer GI's attempt to learn German, and as a result, many feel reluctant to leave the confines of their American sanctuaries. Those who do venture into the

city act as though they were back in the U.S.A. The city of Giessen, where my wife and I lived, is no exception. I distinctly recall several occasions when my English students told me about American soldiers in downtown Giessen asking for directions in English without even a simple "Können Sie Englisch?" The students would then say to me, "Why should we make the acquaintance of Americans living in our country when they don't even make a minimal effort to speak German?" "An ironic situation," I thought to myself, "here are Americans and Germans living together, yet oceans apart."

The Fulbright Teachers Exchange is an ideal vehicle for promoting international understanding. An American teacher in Germany has direct contact with hundreds of students, faculty members, and administrators on a daily basis. If there is an American military base in the same city, then he/she can serve as a liaison for both communities. The Herderschule, located in Giessen, a city of over 75,000 inhabitants plus 5000 Americans, provided me with an opportunity to establish meaningful contact between both groups.

Two months after I had more or less adjusted to teaching at the Gymnasium, I initiated a number of activities designed to (1) stimulate English language instruction, (2) present American views on problems in the United States, and (3) improve German-American relations on an interpersonal level.

Before I describe these activities, I must emphasize

that undertakings of this nature require cooperation on every level: student, teacher, administrator, and military personnel. The cooperation of key individuals in the Gymnasial hierarchy and in the military ultimately determined the realization of my projects. In this regard three people deserve special thanks for their contributions: (1) the Direktor (principal), for his farsightedness, his pro-American attitude, and his permission to integrate many events into the regular school day; (2) an American Major, for supplying films, film specialists, and American military facilities for movies and social gatherings; and (3) the Gymnasial-zweigleiter (assistant principal), for his tireless efforts, organizational expertise, efficiency, and dependability, which were, in large measure, responsible for the success of the activities.

An attempt was made to involve three groups at the Herderschule: (1) Mittelstufe or junior high students, (2) Oberstufe or senior high students, and (3) teachers and administrators. The activities fall into five categories: 1. Educational Films, 2. Films for Entertainment, 3. School Exchanges, 4. German-American Social Gatherings, and 5. Basketball Games.

1. Educational Films

With the cooperation of the English Department staff and the administration, I introduced three series of films

on prejudice and racial discrimination, the women's liberation movement, and American football. The entire Oberstufe, some 500 students in grades eleven through thirteen, saw most of these films during the regular school day. Since many English classes met at the same hour, it was possible to show the films in the auditorium to several classes at one time. It must be said that a few teachers opposed the introduction of films into their English courses because they felt that the routine course work in their classes was being interrupted. On the other hand, the vast majority of the English teachers as well as the administration fully endorsed my program. They recognized that the students needed an occasional interruption from text analysis and that this was a golden opportunity to view movies on provocative subjects expressed in native American English. To ensure that everyone participated in the film program, the assistant principal posted an official schedule of the times for each English class with the following gentle reminder: "Die Kursleiter Englisch sind während der Kursstunden zur Teilnahme verpflichtet."[2]

The series on prejudice and racial discrimination consisted of four films. The first film, The Eye of the Storm, is the story of an experiment performed in a third-grade class in a small "lily-white" town in Iowa. The

[2] The English teachers [and their students] are obliged to participate during their English classes.

teacher divided the class into two groups on the basis of eye color. She labelled one group inferior and one superior. In a short time the children were at one another's throats. Soon, the pupils who had been told that they were inferior behaved as if they were inferior, and those who had been informed that they were superior acted as if they were superior. The effects of discrimination were dramatic. The next three films, Black and White Uptight, The Friendly Game, and A Day in the Night of Jonathan Mole, examined the sources of prejudice, the psychological aspects of discrimination, and the effects of stereotyping.

The showing of these films was followed by discussions, led by a black Lieutenant, who was an equal opportunity officer in Giessen, several guest speakers, my wife, and myself. For those who may be unfamiliar with military jargon these days, an equal opportunity officer is an officer whose main function is to keep the peace between black and white soldiers.... The Lieutenant's enthusiasm and knowledge provoked lively discussions, and several classes invited him back after the series was over.

During these film discussions we noticed that the German students were reluctant to speak English in front of students from other English classes. We therefore decided to hold the discussions in each classroom instead of in the auditorium. The discussions sometimes became heated debates. The discussions were best, of course, in the English Leistungskurse, or courses

for English majors. Although talk often centered on black-white relations in the United States and on race relations in the military in Giessen, examples of German prejudice were also brought forth. The treatment of the Gastarbeiter "foreign workers" from Southern Europe was one such example.

On the topic of the women's movement, we showed only one film, 51%. In this film three vignettes about working women are presented. The first is about Sally, a young, ambitious clerical worker, whose boss categorizes her in this way: "I know the kind of kid she is.... She likes her job, it's where she belongs.... She happens to be making a good salary for a woman." The second concerns Charlotte, a bright young woman, qualified in every respect to do managerial work but one--she's a woman. Her supervisors claim that she might not be strong enough emotionally to bear the constant pressure. And finally we meet Anne, a successful businesswoman, who is shown counselling a man who had hoped to win the promotion that she has just received. My wife and I led the discussions about this film, but since we were unable to get to all the classes, my wife prepared a series of discussion questions on topics such as job stereotyping for males and females, discrimination in employment, and men's attitudes about working for women supervisors. Reactions to the film were mixed. Some students considered the plight of these women exaggerated by the film, while others were not familiar enough with the women's

liberation movement in Germany to make intelligent contributions.

There was an American teaching assistant at the Herderschule and he was responsible for the film series on American football. Naturally, the students were well acquainted with the intricacies of German Fussball, but American football was another story. Meeting after school with interested students, the teaching assistant explained the rules of the game and showed film highlights of several world championship games.

The success of this educational film program was recognized by all. The receptivity of the students to the film medium was certainly a factor in their positive response. In addition, German students enjoy controversy. The more controversial a subject, the more enthusiastically they respond. I feel the students benefitted from the program in at least two ways: (1) improvement of their listening comprehension skill by exposure to the modern spoken language, and (2) the opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues with native Americans.

2. Films for Entertainment

The overall interest in the educational films inspired me with another idea. Why not make available popular current movies? The students could see such films in local theaters, but they would be shown with dubbed-in German

dialogue. With permission from the military authorities in Giessen, I was able to reserve the American Theater for the high school students of the Herderschule on four afternoons. The officer in charge took a big risk, because films shown in American theaters are reserved for American military personnel, Department of the Army civilians, and their guests. If the German theater owners in Giessen had learned of this, they might have filed suit against the Army, since admission prices at German movie houses are much higher than those at the military theaters. Thanks to a favorable exchange rate, the German students paid only one-fourth to one-third the usual admission price. This was an added inducement and one which contributed greatly to the good student turn-out.

Fortunately, the American Armed Forces Motion Picture Service provided monthly programs with a synopsis of each film. Keeping the students' interests in mind, I selected the following four films: American Graffiti; Jimi Hendrix, the biography of a rock star; and the two disaster epics Juggernaut and Towering Inferno.

While selecting the films was relatively easy, coordinating the showings was not. Since the regular evening shows at the American Theater began at 6:00 p.m., we had to be out of the theater by 5:00 p.m. This meant that we had to schedule the films at 2:30 p.m. which conflicted with classes. Choosing a day was also a problem. Mondays and Thursdays

were not feasible at all because classes often lasted until 4:00 p.m. There was, understandably, a certain reluctance on the part of the administration to release students from classes to attend these movies, but under the circumstances the principal agreed to allow early dismissal on other days. Friday was the last day of school before the weekend, which left only two possible days on which to schedule films--Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Even here there were problems: Klassenarbeiten (regularly scheduled exams) and other afternoon classes often conflicted with possible movie dates. Another problem that had to be taken into consideration was transportation. Since students are not bussed to school in Germany, many commute by public transportation. But buses and trains run infrequently to remote towns, and as a result some students would not get home until 7:00 p.m. after attending a film.

A major problem for me concerned publicity. How could I persuade 500 students to spend money on a film in a foreign language which would challenge their linguistic abilities? How could I convince them that it would be worthwhile to cross town on a public bus at their own expense? And how could I get them to sacrifice their free time after a long day of classes? The obstacles were many, but by means of circulars, posters, announcements over the loud-speaker, encouragement from the English teachers, and the principal's permission to miss late afternoon classes, we managed to

attract an average of 130 students and teachers to each film. Here is one of the circulars I drew up:

> Am Donnerstag, den 30. Januar werden die Schüler der Herderschule (ab der 10. Klasse) die Möglichkeit haben, den erstklassigen amerikanischen Film "American Graffiti" zu sehen bekommen. Einige von Ihnen haben sicherlich neulich im Fernsehen die Vorschau davon gesehen. Der Film versucht die Teenagergeneration der 60-Jahre in Kalifornien zu schildern. Das war diese amerikanische Teenagergeneration, die zuerst Autos gehabt haben. Wolfman Jack fing damals im Radio an zu heulen, die beste Rock Musik wurde Tag und Nacht gespielt und die Teenager haben sich abends auf alle möglichen Weisen amusiert.
>
> Der Film war so populär in Amerika, dass die Amerikaner lange Schlange stehen mussten, um den Film zu sehen. So lange werden Sie bestimmt nicht warten müssen, da das Skyline Theater für uns wieder reserviert ist. Sie brauchen nur 2 DM mitzubringen. Der Film fängt um 14.30 an. Diejenigen, die normalerweise Nachmittagsunterricht haben, werden beurlaubt werden. Die Noten (12/13) werden vorher besprochen. Bitte belohnen Sie das Entgegenkommen des Skyline Theaters durch rege Beteiligung und durch pünktliches Erscheinen.[3]

[3]On Thursday, January 30, the students of the

The film American Graffiti was without a doubt the smash hit of the season. Who will ever forget the scene where John, the tee-shirted car freak, and Carol, his wise-cracking sister, pull up alongside a '60 Cadillac full of laughing girls stopped at a traffic light. John and Carol jump out of their souped-up hot rod, deflate the tires of the Caddie, and spray shaving cream all over its windows. When the light turns green, John and Carol leave the Cadillac stranded at the intersection while traffic begins to back up and horns start to honk.

As I was watching the film I became aware of the fact that the students and teachers were laughing not only as loudly as I was but in the right places! Had I not known that the viewers were Germans, I would have assumed they were Americans. The dialogue of American Graffiti is colored

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Herderschule (tenth grade and above) will have the opportunity to see a first-rate American film, American Graffiti. Some of you have undoubtedly seen previews of it recently on TV. The film attempts to depict the teenage generation of the 1960's in California. This was the first American teenage generation to have cars. At that time Wolfman Jack could be heard howling over the radio. The best rock 'n' roll was played day and night and the teenagers entertained themselves in every possible way.

The movie was so popular in the United States that Americans had to stand in long lines to see it. You certainly won't have to wait very long since Skyline Theater has been reserved for us once again. Just bring 2 DM with you. The movie begins at 2:30. Those individuals who normally have afternoon classes will be excused. Course grades in classes twelve and thirteen will be discussed beforehand. We hope that many of you will take advantage of this opportunity extended by Skyline Theater and will show your appreciation by being on time.

with the teenage slang of the late fifties and early sixties. It is not easy to think of German slang equivalents for: coupe, ding-a-ling, Edsel, hot rod, to lay rubber, to peel out, to rev a car, shotgun, Studebaker, and wheels. Car terms were particularly plentiful throughout the film. No wonder, teenage life revolved around those great shiny hulks of iron. What about popular hairstyles back then--the butch haircut and ducktail? Or take those outrageous names teenagers dreamed up for one another: teeny bopper, creep, dip, dope, dork, drip, chicken fink, goofy, jerk, punk, spastic, grungy little twerp, big weenie, and wimp. American Graffiti contained other interesting lexical items as well: booze, carhops, chick, cool, cooties, drive-in, knuckle sandwich, necking, going steady, the strip, tacky, and white bucks. Although the students and teachers had difficulty with these words and expressions, they clearly understood enough to thoroughly enjoy this classic.

The success of this film spread by word of mouth to students at other Gymnasien in Giessen, and I was often asked if they could join in the fun. Unfortunately, I had to deny this request, although I am sure that occasionally students from other schools managed to slip in with their friends from the Herderschule. Because of the complexities involved in setting up films at the Army theater--school schedule conflicts, transportation problems, advertising needs, and the fear of angering local theater owners--I was able to schedule only four films. But their popularity had an

unexpected effect: last summer while visiting friends in Giessen, I discovered that one German movie house was showing American and British films in the original sound track--without dubbing.

3. School Exchanges

In the fall, the Direktor received a memo from the Hessen Regierungspräsidium "administrative headquarters" requesting that he establish ties with an American school in the vicinity. On the principal's request, I initiated contact with the Frankfurt American High School and the Giessen American Junior High School for the purposes of setting up student exchange programs.

The exchange with the school in Frankfurt was very difficult to arrange. Besieged by requests from local Frankfurt Gymnasien, the high school administrators were reluctant to establish programs with German schools outside the city limits. Giessen is located 45 miles away from Frankfurt. My constant phone calls and letters, and the active support of the German teacher at Frankfurt High School eventually brought results. It was decided that a group of students from the Herderschule would spend a day at the American high school and that later in the month American students would visit the Herderschule. The problem of distance between the two schools was solved by limiting American participation to those Frankfurt High School students living

in Giessen. This was done to encourage informal contact after school hours.

For the visit to the Frankfurt American High School, we selected twenty-three German students majoring in English with high academic averages. Unfortunately, the same criteria were not applied to the American students chosen to host the Germans. Since there were relatively few American high school students living in Giessen, all those interested in participating were accepted. I was somewhat disappointed with the American participants because not one of them spoke German with any degree of proficiency. In fact, many of them were not studying German at all! The German students, on the other hand, were easily able to hold their own in English.

Since German schools do not have buses at their disposal, it was necessary to charter one for the day. The students shared the cost of this expense by contributing 10 marks per person.

When we arrived at the Frankfurt High School, the German teacher who had handled the arrangements for our visit briefed the students on the American school system and assigned an American student to assist each German guest. The German students attended classes with their hosts and had a chance to explore the school's facilities.

I think the German students were struck by the independence of the American students in the classroom. Teachers would assign projects in class, leave the room for a few minutes,

and the Americans would quietly busy themselves with their assignments. In some courses, the students would break up into study groups and the teacher would pass from one group to another as an adviser. German teachers rarely do this. The American curriculum was also quite different. The American students had very few required courses. The study of foreign languages, for example, was completely voluntary, not compulsory as in the German schools. Certain subjects such as band, chorus, drafting, industrial arts, play production, and photography were completely unknown to the German guests. Some of these courses are certainly offered at the Berufsfachschulen "vocational schools" and Fachschulen "technical schools", but never in the Gymnasien, Realschulen, or Hauptschulen. At noon the German students were exposed to their first hot lunch served in a school cafeteria. American ice cream proved to be the favorite dessert. German schools do not have eating facilities. At the Herderschule and other Gymnasien students can bring their lunches if they wish, but they are also free to go home or to a local restaurant.

Although the ride to the American high school had seemed like an outing to the students, on the return trip many of them wondered aloud how anyone could possibly do homework after such a strenuous day--six hours of class plus nearly a three hour bus ride! Even German students living in remote areas of Hessen never commute more than 15 miles to school. I pointed out that travelling 90 to 100 miles to and from

school was not an unusual phenomenon in some parts of the United States. I explained that in the southeastern United States, for example, children are bussed this distance to achieve racial balance. And students in the sparsely populated states of the Far West travel similar distances to attend the closest school.

The Herderschule reciprocated by hosting the Americans later in the month. Since the American guests were not fluent in German, they attended mostly English classes. This meant, of course, that the German students accompanying the Americans could not follow their normal school-day routine. In those science courses in which American guests were present, both students and teachers alike attempted to explain in English exactly what was transpiring. The visiting of classes was followed by a question-and-answer period on the German school system, conducted by the pädagogischer Leiter, an assistant principal. Believe it or not,the American students were most impressed with the Herderschule's bell system for changing classes: the bells sounded like church chimes! The physical layout of the Herderschule with its new classrooms and furniture and its modern laboratories outfitted with the latest scientific equipment also created a favorable impression on the American students, especially since the American school in Frankfurt is housed in a dilapidated World War II structure. The Americans also felt that the German students showed more respect towards their teachers and that as a result, they learned more. Judging from the letters the Direktor received

from the German language teacher at the Frankfurt High School and her students, the Americans enjoyed their visit to the Herderschule very much.

The second exchange program we organized was between the Herderschule and the Giessen American Junior High School and it proved to be an unqualified success. Every week four Americans and four Germans began a week-long visit at one another's schools. We felt this length of time would permit each participant to become fully acquainted with the new school system and way of life. To ensure that the American pupils were adjusting to their new surroundings, I held two sessions per week with each group. At the first meeting, which normally took place shortly after their arrival at the Herderschule, I would explain the school schedule to them, try to allay any fears they might have about entering a foreign environment, and escort them to their new classes. At the end of the week, I met with them again to try to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the exchange program based upon their experiences. I posed questions such as: (1) Did they encounter any particular problems in or out of class during their week at the Herderschule? (2) What did they like best about the German school? (3) What did they like least? (4) Did they come away with any new impressions of German life and schools? (5) How did they think the exchange could be improved?

To insure that the Americans were not isolated from their

classmates, one German pupil from each class was assigned to assist each American for the week. In many instances, this proved unnecessary. Language problems seemed to melt away, since the German students were able to communicate well in English. By the same token, a small number of American students with German mothers and American fathers spoke fluent German. Pupils of both schools formed friendships very quickly during the week, and in one case, an American girl came away with thirty addresses, in other words, the addresses of the entire class! My German colleagues frequently made use of the native speakers during English classes. The same was true of the German language teacher at the American Junior High School, who called on the German pupils during German class. This exchange was so popular among the pupils, that German pupils at the Herderschule felt slighted if they did not have an American guest in their class each week. An attempt was made to place at least one American in every seventh, eighth, and ninth grade class for the duration of the exchange--February through May. But due to the difference in size between the two schools, this was not always possible.

After the first five weeks of the exchange, a discussion session was held at the Herderschule for all the students who had participated up to that point. With the administrators of both schools present, I posed questions on language difficulties, what was different about the schools and teachers, making friends, what they liked best about the exchange, and so on.

The American youngsters detected a significant difference in subject level, despite the fact that they were placed in parallel grades at the German school. The Germans, they felt, were clearly more advanced in many subjects. In the area of foreign language training, there was no comparison. Most German pupils had studied English for two to four years and had begun another foreign language. One young American pupil felt that the German grading system evaluated students on the basis of what they knew, whereas the American school system seemed to grade "effort". "At the American school, a student can be at the top of his class and still not know anything," he said. Teachers were friendly and courteous at both schools. The German participants were surprised at the freer atmosphere in the junior high, in which order was still maintained. Total chaos would reign, they felt, if a German teacher merely stepped out the door. The Americans thoroughly enjoyed the "short" German school day. Classes for pupils in the Mittelstufe (grades seven through ten) were over by 1:00 p.m., a full two hours earlier than the junior high.

As for making friends, one American youngster replied, "Someone was always with me, helping me with my schedule. During the breaks kids I didn't know would come over and introduce themselves to me. I used to think Germans stuck pretty much to themselves and were unfriendly--not any more I don't." Another was grateful that about half way through the exchange, a sprightly seventh-grader at the Herderschule

started meeting the American guests every afternoon and guiding them in finding the right buses and making the correct transfers to get home. Formerly, the Americans were either picked up in cars, or they walked back to base rather than venture alone onto the public transportation system. One of the German participants commented on how her ideas about Americans had taken a 180-degree turn: "At home I heard mostly negative things about Americans--how they had destroyed Germany during the war, and about the current brutality and murder rate in the United States. Americans aren't like that at all. They're people, just like us." These comments and others confirmed the success of the exchange program.

The exchange between the two schools grew in several ways. Since many German students expressed particular interest in the activity period at the junior high, the guidance counselor there suggested that they be allowed to participate in an activity of their choosing after the normal school day at the Herderschule. (German schools do not offer extracurricular activities.) The students had a choice of 18 activities including aikido, cartooning, hat-making, needlepoint, and softball. The original exchange also led to a new type of exchange: for weekends and during vacations, American and German students became members of one another's families.

The Herderschule received a good deal of favorable

publicity from these exchanges. Three articles appeared in one American newspaper and two German papers.[4] German schools compete for students in much the same way as American universities. If schools do not attract enough students, they lose funds. Thanks in part to this publicity, the Herderschule reached its enrollment goal long before the end of the school year.

The crowning event of the exchange between the two schools was a field day held in May at the American Junior High School and attended by 70 youngsters. The guidance counselor organized and supervised the many exciting events. Germans and Americans were integrated and divided into six teams. The events included a balloon relay, back-to-back race, frisbee throw, gunny sack race, three-legged race, a wheelbarrow race, and a tug of war. Since most of the events were brand new to the German youngsters, detailed instructions were provided to each team, and the teams rotated at regular intervals to different events. At noon, the principal and his wife cooked hamburgers and baked beans

[4] Marshall Winokur, "Americans and Germans Exchange Schools," Christian Science Monitor, 14 July 1975, p. 20; "Begegnungen zwischen deutschen und amerikanischen Schülern beispielhaft [Meetings between German and American Pupils Exemplary]," Giessener Anzeiger, 2 May 1975, p. 6; "Schüler-Austauschprogramm soll Kontakte fördern [Pupil Exchange Program Aims to Promote Contacts]," Giessener Allgemeine, 9 May 1975, p. 15.

for the hungry athletes. Lunch was followed by bobbing for apples and a chocolate pudding competition. In the latter event, blindfolded contestants had to spoon-feed each other. As well may be imagined, total chaos ensued whenever a contestant received chocolate pudding on his/her face or clothes instead of in his/her mouth. In a letter to the principal of the American Junior High School, the German pupils wrote: "Auch war es toll, dass die Schüler keine Spielverderber waren und nachher bei den Spielen, z.B., Puddingessen mitgemacht haben und sogar gelacht haben, als sie über und über mit Pudding beschmiert waren."[5] Needless to say, the boys and girls have fond memories of this field day. It served as a fitting climax to the contacts between the two schools. The Giessener Anzeiger (9 May 1975) published a short article on the German-American gathering entitled "Zwölf Wettbewerbe [Twelve Contests]."

4. German-American Social Gatherings

Shortly before Christmas vacation the principal of the American Junior High School invited teachers of the Herderschule to his annual Christmas party. Although I was only able to muster a few of my colleagues on short notice, they

[5] And it was great that the [American] pupils were not spoilsports and that afterwards during the games, for example during the pudding-eating contest, they not only joined in but laughed and laughed when they were smeared with pudding.

spent a pleasant evening getting acquainted with faculty members of the American school and sampling American Christmas cookies and cakes. This Christmas party was the precursor of future get-togethers.

I might add that of all the activities I endeavored to coordinate, the social gatherings for adults were the most difficult. There were a variety of reasons for this: (1) Adults are, I discovered, hard to please. They are neither as manageable nor as flexible as students. (2) Adults have many obligations--home, family, friends, profession--which considerably complicates the scheduling of activities. (3) On the German side, I detected a certain reservation about getting together with strangers. This was due in part to the fact that they were shy about speaking English in front of Americans, lest they make a mistake. On this account, they need not have been concerned for their knowledge of English was superb.

In January I persuaded the Major who had helped with the film programs to utilize funds at his disposal for a German-American dinner party in the Giessen Officers' Club. Since we were limited to fifteen couples on each side, I thought it best to invite mostly members of the Herderschule English staff, figuring that this would facilitate communication among the American officers and the German teachers. My plans were somewhat thwarted in this regard, since the principal felt that all five administrators should be present.

The party was held in late February. To encourage

conversation and mixing, cocktails were served in the lounge. All traces of shyness had vanished by the time dinner was served. The Major and I had worked out a seating arrangement based on the ages and hobbies of our guests. This proved to be a good idea. After feasting on a roast beef dinner, some couples moved onto the dance floor, some to the bar, and a third group to the game rooms. The party did not break up until after midnight. The next day my German colleagues told me enthusiastically that they had had an excellent time.

At the end of May the Herderschule reciprocated by holding a dinner party in a nice hotel outside of Giessen. At my suggestion, the number of guests was increased to twenty-five couples on each side. This enabled us to invite more teachers from the Herderschule as well as a few American teachers from the junior high school. Again, Germans and Americans were seated by age and interests. After a delicious pork dinner, couples engaged in quiet conversation or tried their luck at German bowling. The party lasted well into the early hours of the morning.

I was particularly pleased to learn that a number of Germans and Americans got together on their own afterwards. Of course, this had been the purpose of the dinner parties. A number of American couples who had already spent several years in Giessen were surprised to discover, thanks to the assistance of some of the German teachers, that the Hessen countryside was dotted with charming castles and imposing

ruins. "Why haven't we met these German teachers before now?" they demanded of me.

5. Basketball Games

Unknown to me for my first three months in Germany was the fact that the Herderschule harbored first-rate junior high and senior high varsity basketball teams. The principal's son, who attended the Herderschule and who was well aware of these facts, challenged the American Junior High School team to a competition. Two games took place--one in December and one in January--between the junior high teams. In order to give each team home court advantage, one game was played on the Army base and the other in the Herderschule gymnasium. This enabled both German and American spectators to see the games. Although the scores for both games were lopsided in favor of the German team, the cheering on both sides of the court was an indication that a good time was had by all. The two local German newspapers printed short articles on the Herderschule victories.[6]

For the senior high school team at the Herderschule I was able to schedule four games against first-rate American teams during the months of February, March, and April.

[6]"Herderschüler erneut erfolgreich [Herderschule Pupils Victorious Again]," Giessener Allgemeine, 31 January 1975; "Internationales Basketballtreffen [International Basketball Match]," Giessener Anzeiger, 31 January 1975.

These matches provided the Herderschule team with sorely needed practice in preparation for the annual German high school basketball tournament in Berlin. Although I wish that I could have arranged more games for the Herderschule team, the problems involved in selecting a suitable time and place for the players and coaches were overwhelming.

The first game was held in Wiesbaden against the best American high school team in Germany. It was probably the most exciting of the games and it was also a "first": never before had the top American team been pitted against the ranking German team. The score was close throughout and the game was decided by only one point--in favor of the Americans. Since the Herderschule had chartered a bus for the occasion to transport its athletes to Wiesbaden, it was possible to bring along a small cheering section of students. Relatively few Americans attended the match because the American coach, I think, did not take us very seriously, and as a result, failed to publicize the event. He had played other German high school teams and had beaten them all by large margins. Why should ours be any different? I am sure that the outcome of the game changed his mind about the quality of our team. In fact, he eagerly suggested annual games between the two schools.

The remaining games were played against excellent Army teams in Giessen. These games, played on the Army base, attracted a good deal of attention. Although the military brand of basketball was more physical and lacked finesse,

the Herderschule players were able to retain their composure, defeating the Americans in two out of three games. They then went on to win their second straight basketball championship in Berlin. The local newspaper, the Giessener Anzeiger (6 May 1975), mentioned the four games against various American teams in an article entitled "Herderschüler in Berlin [Herderschule Pupils in Berlin]."

Conclusion

By the end of the school year, I would estimate that well over one thousand German and American students, teachers, administrators, and military personnel had participated in one or more of these five programs--the educational film series, the films for entertainment, the school exchanges on the junior and senior high school levels, the social gatherings for teachers and officers, and the basketball games. The success of these activities, I think, can be measured by the numerous positive responses from students, teachers, and officers alike. Students approached me almost daily about future movies, exchanges, and basketball games. The German and American adults also enjoyed one another's company, and some formed lasting friendships. Three newspapers published a total of seven articles about the various activities. The articles were not only informative, but served to increase the popularity of the Herderschule. Inquisitive parents in the German community even telephoned the Direktor for details

about various activities.

Although I often spent from ten to twenty hours per week on these activities, I was not alone in these endeavors. Many people took the time and effort to make these programs successful. What concerned me most as I was preparing to return to the United States was the question as to who would carry on these programs after my departure. The difficult task of making the right contacts and setting up the programs had already been accomplished. Yet someone with interest, time, and energy would nevertheless be needed to serve as liaison. In Germany teachers are given reduced teaching loads or an Entlastung for assuming extracurricular duties beyond their normal teaching schedule. People do not volunteer their time. I knew that the Herderschule would be reluctant to assign a teacher to administer these activities. As a result, the responsibility was given to one of the assistant principals.

I have visited the Herderschule in each of the three years since my Fulbright exchange. I am happy to report that the exchange between the Herderschule and the Giessen American Junior High School is thriving. Throughout the year German and American pupils spend a week at one another's schools. And not only have American and German students become members of each other's families for weekend visits and holidays, but so have their parents! In addition, faculty members from the two schools play volleyball together on a regular basis.

American students have learned to play soccer from the Herderschule physical education teacher while their German counterparts have learned baseball and softball from the American gym teacher. On one occasion, a group of American students, under the supervision of the guidance counselor, presented a performance of Indian dances at the Herderschule. Since the American field day, the Herderschule has reciprocated with several field days of its own, complete with Würstchen "hot dogs," Pommes Frites "French fries," and Cola. The German press in Giessen has become almost blasé about the frequent school exchanges judging from a recent article published by the Giessener Allgemeine (7 July 1978) entitled "Einwöchiger Schüleraustausch ist Tradition [One-Week Pupil Exchange is Tradition]." The most pleasant surprise for me, however, was a more recent cooperative effort between the two schools. For the past two years a large group of German and American eighth-graders chaperoned by German and American teachers have spent a week together hiking, swimming, and visiting museums and medieval towns in the Black Forest region. The Giessener Allgemeine (2 May 1977)published an article about this mutual endeavor entitled "Das Austauschprogramm hat sich prächtig entwickelt [The Exchange Program Has Developed Splendidly]."

As for the other programs which I initiated, these have unfortunately fallen by the wayside. In all fairness to the assistant principal in charge of the junior high school exchange, he could not be expected to administer these

additional activities along with his regular duties. In fact, I think that it would be extremely difficult for anyone but an American to arrange for film programs through the U.S. military. Although there was an American at the Herderschule the year after I left, he chose not to get involved in any of these activities. Fortunately the need for a film program has diminished somewhat since one of the local theater owners has begun showing American and British films in English. Although the formal social gatherings for teachers and officers no longer take place, individual faculty members of the Herderschule continue to meet informally with American officers and teachers. Much to my regret, the talented senior high school basketball team has not played a single game against an American team since my departure. During my three visits to the Herderschule, the German coach pleaded with me to stay so that I could set up matches for his team!

Although many Fulbright teachers do not live in cities located near American bases, this by no means precludes other types of exchanges. One American instructor who lived in the Black Forest region expended considerable time and energy to work out a program for twenty-three of his high school students from the state of Washington. They spent two months in Germany under the auspices of private families in the town of Grenzach. Two other Fulbright teachers, one from Miami, Florida, the other from Lincoln, Nebraska, set up similar exchanges which have become annual events.

During the German Easter vacation, students from Petershagen and Kassel fly to Miami and Lincoln respectively, where they live and attend school with American students. Later, the American students who host the German guests spend a month on a similar program in Petershagen and Kassel. These exchanges are, of course, invaluable for the students. Not only are they exposed to a different culture and forced to communicate in a foreign tongue, but they frequently form deep and lasting friendships.

Housing, Friendship, and Travel

Three factors were largely responsible for making our year in Germany so enjoyable: (1) our very comfortable living conditions, (2) the many close friendships my wife and I were able to form with our colleagues, and (3) our opportunities to travel. My wife still refers to her year in Germany as one of the best in her life.

Long before we moved to Germany, I had contacted my German exchange partner about housing. Since the housing market is tight, he very kindly agreed to try to find an apartment for us. Upon our arrival we were surprised to learn that he had located not one, but two completely furnished apartments for us to choose from. The first, located around the corner from the Herderschule, was a bit small. We chose the second. It was large (100 sq. meters), spacious, modern, and located in a picturesque medieval

village only a ten minute drive from the school. The living room windows opened out onto two lovely castle ruins, one of which was illuminated at night. We were charmed by the village's quiet, provincial life style, by the beauty of its narrow streets, Fachwerk "half-timbered" houses, and our Burg "castle." This setting provided a much greater contrast to our life in the States, than would, for instance, living in a large, cosmopolitan, modern German city. My wife, usually a late sleeper, arose at the crack of dawn every day for several months in order to walk into the sleepy village to buy fresh Brötchen "rolls" for breakfast. We never felt as though we were "roughing it." This home away from home enabled us to be a family, and thus to make enduring friendships. We were able to do a good deal of entertaining, i.e., we were able to participate in the normal "give and take" that helps form lasting relationships.

My wife and I became very fond of German food. The local Gasthäuser "restaurants" served heaping quantities of tasty food at reasonable prices. We especially took to the delectable Kuchen "cakes" and Torten "tortes", so much so that soon we both had problems fitting into our clothes. Imagine the agonizing decision we faced every day of choosing among a dazzling array of Apfelstrudel, Käsekuchen, Obsttorte, Sahnecremetorte, Sachertorte, and Schwarzwälderkirschtorte "apple strudel, cheese cake, fruit torte, cream torte, Sacher cake, and Black Forest cherry cake!" In an attempt to shed those extra pounds, we imitated our German colleagues and went for

brisk walks in the forest.

It was inevitable that permanent friendships would result from the cooperation I received from my German colleagues in my various endeavors at the Herderschule. And the teachers never hesitated to consult us or ask for assistance. The give and take was truly remarkable. Before long, my wife and I were on a Du-basis with many faculty members and their spouses.

My wife had never studied German so when we first arrived in Germany I had to provide a running translation everywhere we went. But she immediately enrolled in a three-month Grundkurs "elementary-course" at the University of Giessen entitled "Deutsch für Ausländer [German for Foreigners]," and she quickly learned enough German to go shopping and generally fend for herself. Soon she was able to participate actively in conversations and to enjoy John Wayne, Elizabeth Taylor, and Telly Savalas (affectionately called der Glatzkopf "baldy") speaking fluent German on TV. My wife had additional language practice because she became friendly with three women colleagues from the Herderschule and they got together frequently for afternoon coffee.

During the spring semester my wife, who is a senior high school English teacher, had the opportunity to teach a twelfth-grade English course at the Herderschule. This allowed her to gain valuable insight into the German educational system.

Invitations from our friends at the Herderschule were at first formal, but as time went on and we exchanged visits again and again, our relationships became less and less formal. In place of the traditional flowers one carries to the hostess, my wife decided to share something American with them. She would bring either American cookies or brownies. The brownies were an immediate success--and her recipe quickly made the rounds at the Herderschule.

In November, my wife and I prepared a traditional Thanksgiving dinner for thirteen people, mostly colleagues in the English Department. To ensure that this meal was truly American, we persuaded an officer's wife to procure the necessary ingredients. Minor problems such as squeezing a twenty-pound bird into a tiny European oven were eventually overcome. For dinner we served turkey with dressing, rich brown gravy, biscuits, a Waldorf salad, dressing, broccoli, corn pudding, cranberries, pecan and pumpkin pies à la mode. Most of these foods were new to our friends, and they never did stop talking about the feast at the Winokurs. Some of them, who had not been to the United States, expressed the usual surprise that we did not eat out of cans. The next morning we found ourselves surrounded not only by mountains of dishes, but also by the bouquets of flowers and house gifts that our guests had brought. Among the gifts were two books, a box of chocolates, two bottles of champagne, and a hand-made ceramic bowl. That certainly made cleaning-up an easier chore.

My wife and I never could figure out whether or not to eat supper before we visited a German family in the evening. We were usually invited for 8:00 p.m. and told that there would be something to eat. Depending on the hostess this "something to eat" ranged from a few appetizers to a spread of cheeses, hot dishes, and desserts. In time we learned that the best policy was not to eat anything before going visiting.

We renewed our ties with our good friends in Giessen this past summer. Since several colleagues offered to put us up during our visit, we spent an entire week going from one home to another. Although many Germans consider the United States as far away as the moon, we finally managed to persuade several faculty members to visit the U.S. Four colleagues from the Herderschule, including the Direktor and his family, visited the United States last summer. We took one of my colleagues on a three-week guided tour from Massachusetts to Alabama. For another we supplied maps and guide books for a trip to the West Coast.

While we lived in Germany on the Fulbright Exchange, we tried to take advantage of vacation periods for travelling. German teachers have a total of three months vacation during the school year, but unlike the American summer vacation, the German summer vacation is only six weeks long. The remaining six weeks are divided among fall, Christmas, Easter, and sometimes Pentecost vacations. My wife and I toured most

of Germany, and we made trips to Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Lichtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, and Yugoslavia. In fact, we visited countries my colleagues have never been to, despite their proximity to Germany.

In summary, the Fulbright Teachers Exchange to Germany provides the Fulbrighter with a variety of opportunities: (1) a chance to promote international understanding, (2) a chance to present American views on problems in the United States, (3) a chance to improve one's knowledge of the German language and school system, (4) a chance to increase one's awareness of German life and customs, (5) a chance to make life-long German friends, and (6) a chance to explore many countries in Europe. I recommend this exchange very highly.